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AJANTA MURALS COMPOSITION AND TECHNIQUES

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ABSTRACT:

The oldest and closest contemporary text related to Ajanta fine arts is Vishnudharmottar (circa 6th century). It is mentioned in the chapter Chitrasutra that painting is an excellent art: Kaladani Pravaram Chitra Dharaniya Kadmarth Mokshadam or Yathad Jandanam Pravara: Kshitish-Tatha Kakalnam-Iya Chitrakalpa. Ajanta artists used very ingenious techniques to create 'ground' and execute paintings. The 'carrier' for the paintings was a compact volcanic rock with many cavities. The surface of the rock was made uneven and rough to give a tight grip to the covering plaster. Holes in volcanic rocks act as keys to hold the plaster firmly to the wall.



KEYWORDS: Ajanta Murals, Composition, Techniques.

INTRODUCTION:

Ajanta is the only important record of India's golden age which dates back to the 3rd - 4th century and can be considered as perhaps the greatest creative achievement of mankind. The 30 Buddhist caves built by Wakataka in the remote valley of Ajanta form a devotional complex which is one of the most amazing works in the world. The chronology of the Ajanta Caves is currently under discussion among archaeologists and art historians. The development after Ajanta lasted for two hundred or three hundred years, in succession of different dynasties, can no longer survive and may be questioned by many art historians. After careful research and gathering all the scattered information, now a short chronology has been suggested which will last for about 20 years. Such an approach to Ajanta dating shows significant results from a long-term consideration. It is obvious that excavating and decorating the caves was time consuming but the entire mud mortar and painting would have rarely taken a year for a few dozen artists. The theory of short chronology is based on the famous Visrutacarita that represents the memory of the crepuscule of the great Wakataka kingdom almost to the point. The subject of the wall descriptions in Ajanta are various castes, which are spread out almost like unrestricted scrolls.

The patrons of Ajanta can also compare the data arising from the analysis of mud and pigments described in ancient Indian literature written in Sanskrit. Evidence of the artistic tradition of flowers in Sanskrit literature is found in texts on mythological subjects. The main ancient literature dedicated to the artistic techniques and technical aspects of painting in ancient India was Vastushastra (agreement of residence), Vastuastra (agreement of residence) and Silpastrus (technical agreement). To write a history of Indian painting art one must have specific knowledge about technical contracts. The narrative

mastery and technical knowledge shown by the artists in Ajanta suggests the existence of many art schools already working in the decoration work of Susutra buildings and temples. In the text above, there are several works where the painting technique and the methods to be followed are described.

Painting techniques are the main Indian texts are as follows....

1. The Vishnudharmottara Purana was framed in 6-7thAD after the murals of Ajanta.
2. SamargaSutradhara asilpaotra attributed to the Bhoj king of the 11th century Parmar dynasty is mainly concerned with painting and iconographic art.
3. Mansollasa text in the South Indian pictorial tradition attributed to King Someshwar of the Chalukya dynasty in the early 12th century.
4. Silparatna, written in the 16th century, part of which is entitled "Feature of the Image", which contains a great deal of information on painting techniques.
5. Bhuvana Deva's AparajitaPecha is probably composed after Silparatna which describes the architecture and has concepts of decorative design and creation of paint ground.

Although Vishnudharmottara was designed one or two centuries after the implementation of the Ajanta graffiti, it can be considered as a true reference text for a proper understanding of the process of painting on the site. The other text is written at a time far from Ajanta and relates to different periods. Throughout the text it appears that typical work precedes literacy in both the iconographic and iconological fields. Poets (and not artists) who understood the basic concepts of painting during the observation were given the task of writing Silpa, but they had no first knowledge of the actual technique being followed. For this reason, the prescription provided in the ancient text does not depend on detailed technical procedures. The second reason is that the main part is written in the form of a formula, which serves as a guiding principle for the artists to remember the different parts of the implementation. In addition, formulas have different meanings and translations by different authors.

In fact, there are many conflicting opinions among experts on specific issues regarding the various processes described in the texts. Of the many formulas, the four most important formulas describe the method of preparing paint ground. Among these, Vishnudharmottara and SamargaSutradhara describe the technique of making paint ground using clay earth. The text Mansollasa and Silpratna shows the preparation of the land according to the southern tradition of the subcontinent where the basic ingredient is lime or burnt and the powder is conch shell or white earth which is available in South India, some of the important ancient Indian painting texts that follow the basic elements and process when creating a paint ground and paint are detailed.

The pigments known at Ajanta are red ocher, yellow ocher, green earth, lapis lazuli, carbon black and shell / kaolin lime. The pigments used in India from prehistoric times to the Mughal period are almost identical and without much difference. The pigments identified at Ajanta bear a close resemblance to Fresco's Roman painted works. Ajanta paintings are mainly outlined in carbon black or red ocher. The thickness of the mud mortar varies from a few millimeters to an inch in some cases where the basaltic stone is cut too much. Organic matter such as rice husk, plant seeds and plant fibers are commonly found mixed in mud mortar. The theme of these paintings is Buddhist Jataka stories with beautiful human figures, geometric structures and animal figures. Most of the paintings depict three-dimensional scenes and highlight the artistic skills of Indian painters in 34 AD, known as the Golden Age. The raw material used for making clay is mainly locally available material collected from or near the Waghura River in front of the Ajanta caves. With the exception of blue, all pigments are locally available materials including green which is a product of basaltic rock decomposition. It appears that the mud mortar at Ajanta is a by-product of the basalt collected from the tiger basin used as a filler. Quartz, zeolites and celadonite are the most commonly known aggregates. In Ajanta, less swollen clay has been found to mix 8-10% lime with organic matter to form mud mortar. The technique of painting is purely tempera and animal glue has mostly been used as a binding agent to pigments at Ajanta and related sites. Unlike fresco painting, the painting technique in India is either Tempra or Seco and the

binding medium known in Ajanta is animal glue. It is necessary to understand the composition of ancient mortar and technology to create new mortars for restoration in Ajanta and other places.

Along with a basic knowledge of ancient Indian painting techniques, the preparation of paint grounds, the identification of materials and their decay process are of great importance. It is also necessary to study the microstructure of layers for paint layers and clay, their layers and binding media. Attempts have been made to identify the method of using mud layer ground and painting techniques for Ajanta murals, along with a range of scientific methods and experimental procedures. The composition of the material, the composition and the materials used in the mortar were also examined during the study. Such a study of ancient technology in terms of materials and its use is necessary for conservation activities aimed at the protection of painted mortar.

CAUSES OF BREAKDOWN AND DETERIORATION:

The main reasons for the deterioration and deterioration of Ajanta murals are differences in temperature and humidity, increased flow of intruders, water leaks, insect activity in mud mortars, human sabotage (murals) and excretion of urine and tigers. The presence of old varnish coatings used to mimic the paintings of earlier artists is a major conservation issue in Ajanta. Humidity inside the caves reaches 80% in the rainy season and up to 40% in the summer which causes the paint layer and mud to expand and shrink. This long-term variation results in flaking of the painted layers, disintegration of the mud mortar, and formation of peaks, gaps, and lacunae in the painted layer. There is a large difference in temperature and humidity from the outside to the inside of the cave. The cavities are thermally stable, with wide fluctuations in temperature noticeable from the outside to the inside. Hinyana Cave no. 10, the inside and outside temperature and humidity are almost identical with a slight difference.

The effect of visitors on the murals of Ajanta caves has already been examined in detail. The Archaeological Survey of India has given top priority to the conservation of Ajanta murals, providing proper lighting to all visitors as well as constructing two causeways for proper distribution of visitors, some important painted caves are illuminated by optical fiber.

The main scientific protection of Ajanta murals was done by Italian patrons in 1920 when the cave was under the rule of Nizam of Hyderabad State. In addition to filling gaps and lacuna with Portland lime, most painted surfaces were applied with impure shellac varnish as a protective coating.

CONCLUSION:

Thus it will be seen that the murals of Ajanta are in line with the highest standards laid down in Vishnudharmaottara. In fact, one would think that the text of Vishnudharmottara, which is later than Ajanta, codified all the criteria and standards set by the Ajanta artists for themselves. The descriptions of murals in Vishnudharmottara are a source of anxiety and bring prosperity and cause unequal and incomparable happiness. It fulfils the main objectives of human life, namely religion, meaning, KDMA and salvation. The murals of Ajanta paintings had a wide range of influence in Ceylon, Nepal, Tibet, Afghanistan, Mongolia, China and even as far as Japan. Ajanta Ajanta style murals appear more or less in the paintings of all these countries. The paintings at Sigiriya in Ceylon are the closest to Ajanta. It appears to be almost an extension of the Ajanta tradition. The murals at Uttar Bagh, about 250 km north of Ajanta, suggest that the artist working at the site was from the same school.

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